

**JUNE 2, 2003**

**SCHAKOWSKY VOWS TO CONTINUE  
FIGHT FOR OPEN AND FREE MEDIA**

***FCC DECISION IS AN ASSAULT ON DEMOCRACY AND AN ATTACK ON CONSUMER  
PROTECTION***

**WASHINGTON, D.C. - After Republicans on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to weaken media ownership rules, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, said, "This action by the FCC is an assault on democracy and an attack on consumer protection."**

**Schakowsky, who joined concerned citizens and activists immediately following the vote, promised to fight the decision in Congress because it concentrates even more power in the hands of a few media moguls and limits the public's access to diverse and local viewpoints. "Clearly, this is the most important telecommunications issues our time."**

**Schakowsky said that today's decision to allow even greater media ownership concentration would bring about a new wave of mergers among media giants. She warned, "Such mergers will further limit the public's ability to hear diverse opinions on the critical issues of our time and will weaken the coverage of local news."**

**Schakowsky pointed to the 1996 Telecommunications Act that eliminated the national ownership caps for radio. The result has been greater consolidation in the radio industry, where in almost half of the largest markets, the three largest corporations control 80 percent of the radio audience.**

**"This has made it harder for diverse opinions to be heard," Schakowsky said. "Before the war in Iraq, Clear Channel refused to air a paid radio advertisement that I recorded inviting Chicagoans to a rally in support of peace. At the same time, Clear Channel stations across the country used the airwaves to invite listeners to pro-troop rallies."**

Schakowsky commended Commissioners Copps and Adelstein for their leadership against media concentration and for holding public forums across the country to hear directly from thousands of concerned citizens about their opposition to greater media consolidation.

Schakowsky is a cosponsor of the bipartisan H.R. 2052, the "Preservation of Localism Program Diversity, and Competition in Television Broadcast Services Act." The bill would codify the existing cap on the amount of TV stations a single company can own. Under current law, a company cannot own TV stations that reach more than 35% of US households. Today, the FCC raised the cap to 45%. The higher cap will lead to greater ownership concentration. H.R. 2052 would repeal the FCC's new cap. The bill currently has 41 cosponsors.